

The Italian Appreciation and Appropriation of Illuminated Byzantine Manuscripts, ca. 1200–1450

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Twenty years ago when I was preparing my dissertation on one of the illustrated Greek manuscripts still in Istanbul, I was struck by an obvious question that I have yet to dispel: Where have all the other manuscripts gone and why? Of course, I knew the general patterns of transmission. I was aware of the large holdings of the monasteries of Mt. Athos, and I had already worked in the major collections of western Europe. But I was not prepared for the enormity of a cultural *translatio* that can perhaps be best grasped through simple statistics. Today there are only a few hundred Greek manuscripts in Istanbul, versus well over four thousand manuscripts in both the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, about twelve hundred in the Biblioteca Laurenziana and in the Biblioteca Nazionale di San Marco, and smaller, but not insignificant holdings in the Biblioteca Comunale of most any Italian town of even moderate size.¹ If the comparison is restricted to art historically important manuscripts, the differences are at least as great. The fingers of one hand suffice to enumerate the manuscripts yet remaining in Istanbul,² whereas the *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturehandschriften* will extend over many volumes and perhaps several generations before it is done with western European collections.

Many manuscripts that once filled the libraries of Constantinople, of course, no longer exist due to acts of God and man. In the latter category, we know, for example, that large numbers were destroyed in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest in 1453. Doukas reports, for example, that books “without number . . . were carried off in wagon

¹Statistics taken from M. Richard, *Répertoire des bibliothèques et des catalogues de manuscrits grecs*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1958). I am not aware of a systematic survey of the patterns of the collecting of Greek manuscripts in Istanbul after 1453, but important evidence for that history is to be found in J. Raby, “Mehmed the Conqueror’s Greek Scriptorium,” *DOP* 37 (1983), 15–34, with further references. A useful early account is E. Jacobs, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Bibliothek im Serai zu Konstantinopel*, SBHeid (1919).

²The three most important illustrated manuscripts in the Patriarchal Library have recently been published in color in *The Oecumenical Patriarchate: The Great Church of Christ* (Athens, 1989), figs. 119–158. In the library of the Topaki Sarai, there are two principal manuscripts, both from the 12th century, the famous Octateuch (cod. 8) and a Psalter with commentary (cod. 13). On the former, see J. C. Anderson, “The Seraglio Octateuch and the Kokkinobaphos Master,” *DOP* 36 (1982), 83–114; and on the latter, see A. W. Carr, *Byzantine Illumination, 1150–1250: The Study of a Provincial Tradition* (Chicago, 1987), 226–27; and most interestingly Raby, “Mehmed,” 22–23 n. 40, in which the manuscript is shown to have been in Mehmed’s collection.

loads and dispersed in all directions to the east and west . . . Gospels with all sorts of decoration without measure were either sold, or thrown away, after pulling up the gold and silver.”³ The destruction of sacred books, the sort that would have been decorated, was confirmed by the metropolitan and later cardinal Isidore of Kiev, who was wounded in the conquest and later managed to escape captivity. He may also have been the source for the report of the humanist Lauro Querini that 120,000 Greek manuscripts had been lost in the sack of Constantinople.⁴ When Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, later Pope Pius II, received the news of the fall of Constantinople, he exclaimed, “What shall I say of the countless books, as yet unknown to the Latins, which were there [in Constantinople]? Alas, how many names of great men will now perish! Here is a second death for Homer and for Plato too. Where are we now to seek the philosophers’ and the poets’ works of genius? The fount of the Muses has been destroyed.”⁵ Also alarmed by this threat to Greek culture, Cardinal Bessarion commissioned scribes to buy or copy manuscripts for him: “As long as the common and single hearth of the Greeks [Constantinople] remained standing, I did not concern myself [with gathering manuscripts] because I knew they were to be found there. But when, alas! it fell, I conceived a great desire to acquire all these works, not so much for myself, who possess enough for my own use, but for the sake of the Greeks who are left now as well as those . . . in the future.”⁶

To a certain extent, the accounts of destruction in Constantinople are exaggerated, and one wonders by what calculation it was decided that 120,000 manuscripts had perished, but the losses must have been significant. Yet enough survived in the capital and the provinces of the former empire to make manuscript sleuthing in the East a minor industry for at least three hundred fifty years, or sometime into the nineteenth century.⁷ This cultural appropriation began during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance and at the beginning was overwhelmingly dominated by Italians. It is useful to recall that the royal library of France, the ancestor of the national collection, had not a single Greek manuscript until the late fifteenth century, at a time when the Vatican Library held 800 Greek manuscripts, that of the Medici in Florence 600, and that given by Cardinal Bes-

³*Historia byzantina*, Bonn ed. (1834), 312.

⁴A. Pertusi, *La caduta di Costantinopoli: Le testimonianze dei contemporanei*, I (Verona, 1976), 78, 381 n. 25; K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, II (Philadelphia, 1978), 131.

⁵Setton, *Papacy*, II, 150.

⁶D. J. Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars in Venice* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), 81–82.

⁷By the mid-19th century, the great days of manuscript collecting in the East appeared to be over to judge from the somewhat dispirited account of H. O. Coxe, *Report to Her Majesty's Government on the Greek Manuscripts Yet Remaining in the Libraries of the Levant* (London, 1858). Coxe had set out to visit little-studied Levantine collections and to ascertain their holdings. His principal motive appears to have been acquisition, but he presented himself as only a scholar, for “it was thought that the proprietors of libraries, more especially the principals of religious societies, would be more likely to welcome the student than the trader” (p. 1). Few monasteries, however, were willing to part with their manuscripts, no matter what strategy was employed. “Indeed, I may here state at once, that the idea of purchasing from large proprietors, especially religious foundations, was altogether hopeless.” But only a few years earlier, he was told manuscripts were sold readily (p. 11). Certainly Robert Curzon was able to buy a number of Greek manuscripts, many illustrated, only a decade or so earlier. See his *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant* (London, 1849; repr. London, 1983), where the spirit of Orientalism is not exactly concealed. Even he, however, was aware that many others had preceded him: “so thoroughly were these ancient libraries explored in the fifteenth century, that no unknown classic author has been discovered” (p. 10). Illuminated manuscripts were still obtained through the usual variety of means well into this century; most of those now in American collections, for example, had yet to be uprooted.

sarion to the Republic of Venice, the nucleus of the present Biblioteca Marciana, 482 manuscripts.⁸ The basic point is that something fundamental happened to the textual basis for Greek culture by 1500, and it happened in Italy.

Restricting myself to decorated manuscripts, I wish to reexamine this pattern of transmission, as my contribution to the discussion of "Byzantines and Italians," groups in need of definition and entities that converge and diverge across a continuum of society and culture. For a student of Byzantine art, accustomed to its "tadpole" model of culture, that is, large head (Constantinople) and small body (provinces), the specter of the hydra model of Italian culture is daunting. Since my study concludes in the mid-fifteenth century with the domination of certain centers in central and northern Italy, I will intentionally slight the history of manuscript acquisition and production in southern Italy and Sicily, partly because the Greek-speaking monasteries and churches of that region belonged more or less to the Byzantine commonwealth, producing their own illuminated manuscripts and perhaps importing other such books from Constantinople,⁹ and partly because humanists mined those collections for their treasures, just as they did those farther east.¹⁰

My frame is simple chronology, and my intention is to understand general patterns. I hasten to add that my present concern is not primarily the production of Italian or Byzantine art per se. Thus I will avoid the notion of artistic influence, a concept so vague as to obscure more than it illumines, and one that rests upon specious assumptions of cultural superiority—on either side of the equation.¹¹ Yet a clearer notion of what illustrated Greek manuscripts were available when and where in Italy is presumably not irrelevant to the history of Italo-Byzantine artistic contacts. The Italians will be my principal concern in this account, because it is they who appreciated and appropriated these artifacts, in the etymological senses of valuing and recognizing their worth and making them their own.¹² In the process, the prior significances of those objects were transformed. The new meanings engendered by this cultural appropriation belong to the history of late medieval and early modern Italy, but in so far as institutions and collecting patterns of that period survive to the present, they also constitute foundational strata for the construction of values, classifications, and disciplines in our world.

⁸J. Irigoin, "Georges Hermonyme de Sparte: ses manuscrits et son enseignement à Paris," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, ser. 4 (1977), 23.

⁹Southern Italian illumination is surveyed in A. Grabar, *Les manuscrits grecs enluminés de provenance italienne (IXe–XIe siècles)* (Paris, 1972). In recent years, the most noteworthy publication on the illustrated manuscripts of this region has been the paper by N. G. Wilson, "The Madrid Scylitzes," *Scrittura e Civiltà* 2 (1978), 209–19. He concludes that the manuscript in question was produced in Palermo in the middle of the 12th century after an illustrated model imported from Constantinople. For some illustrated Greek manuscripts that might have come to Sicily in the twelfth century, see notes 30–32 below.

¹⁰For example, Cardinal Bessarion secured a number of manuscripts from southern collections. See N. Wilson, "The Book Trade in Venice ca. 1400–1515," *Venezia, Centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente (secoli XV–XVI): Aspetti e problemi*, II (Florence, 1977), 386; idem, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992), 62; E. Mioni, "Bessarione bibliofilo e filologo," *RSBN*, n.s., 5 (1968), 71–72 lists several.

¹¹On this last point, see the comments, for example, of Oleg Grabar in his review of R. Wittkower, *Selected Lectures*, in *Speculum* 67 (1992), 236.

¹²I further consider the concept of "appropriation" as opposed to "influence" in an essay that will appear in a volume titled *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. R. Nelson and R. Shiff (Chicago, in press).

I. THIRTEENTH AND FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

For my purposes, the Venetian-led occupation of Constantinople in 1204 would appear to be a logical beginning and a meaningful boundary between two different historical epochs. For decades, art historians have posited the impact of Byzantine illuminated manuscripts on Western medieval art, but Hugo Buchthal observed in 1966 that we know of only one illuminated Greek manuscript that was in the West before 1204. The manuscript in question, a kind of "export-ware," is a Psalter, made about 1077 for the church of St. Gereon in Cologne, and, thus, far from Italy.¹³ As far as I know, Buchthal's general observation still holds, and I am not aware of any securely documented case of an illuminated Byzantine manuscript in Italy, excluding Sicily, before the thirteenth century.¹⁴ What I have found surprising is that for some time after 1204 the situation does not seem to have changed dramatically. Here it is instructive to contrast the western European reception of icons or relics from Constantinople.¹⁵

The Latin possession of Constantinople apparently devastated its manuscript production, although Greek manuscripts continued to be produced in outlying regions, as Giancarlo Prato has shown.¹⁶ At the same time, long established collections were dispersed, and older manuscripts acquired new owners. Thereafter, many manuscripts remained in stable collections well into the fifteenth century. For example, a thirteenth-century Latin note in the famed Dioscurides manuscript in Vienna suggests that its context, but not its location, may have shifted after 1204. Yet the manuscript must still have been in Constantinople in the thirteenth century, because, first, it was made for the sixth-century Constantinopolitan patron and, second, the manuscript is well attested in that city in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Then it belonged to the monastery of St. John Prodromos in Petra¹⁷ and was seen there by the most successful of the Italian manuscript hunters, Giovanni Aurispa, during his second voyage to Constantinople in 1421–23.¹⁸ According to Doukas, the Prodromos-Petra monastery, as well as the nearby monastery of the Chora, was overrun by the Turks at the fall of the city.¹⁹ After further vicissitudes, the manuscript was purchased for Emperor Maximilian II in 1569.

¹³As reported in E. Kitzinger, "The Byzantine Contribution to Western Art of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," *DOP* 20 (1966), 35. See now A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), 89.

¹⁴For Sicily, note the examples of Palermo, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. Dep. Museo 4 (see below, note 30), and the supposed model of the Madrid Scylitzes (above, note 9).

¹⁵A useful case study in the importance of Byzantine relics for a French community is presented by P. J. Geary, "Saint Helen of Athyra and the Cathedral of Troyes in the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1977), 149–68. Hans Belting discusses the importation of Eastern icons to the West in *Likeness and Presence* (Chicago, 1994), 330–48.

¹⁶G. Prato, "La produzione libraria in area greco-orientale nel periodo del regno latino di Costantinopoli (1204–1261)," *Scrittura e Civiltà* 5 (1981), 138–47.

¹⁷The provenance of the manuscript is reviewed by E. Mioni, "Un ignoto Dioscoride miniato (il codice greco 194 del Seminario di Padova)," *Libri e stampatori in Padova* (Padua, 1959), 354–57; and by O. Mazal, *Byzanz und das Abendland* (Vienna, 1981), 430.

¹⁸R. Sabbadini, *Le scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli XIV e XV*, I (Florence, 1905), 46–47. The accounts of the manuscript by Italians in the 15th century are also discussed by A. Guiliano, "Il codice di Dioscoride a Vienna in una notizia di Giovanni Tortelli," *Parola del Passato* 23 (1968), 52–54. See also pp. 220–21.

¹⁹*Historia byzantina*, 288. The monastery, nevertheless, survived the conquest but fell into ruins during the following decades: R. Janin, *La géographie ecclésiastique de l'Empire byzantin*, III, pt. 1: *Les églises et les monastères*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1969), 424–25. Several manuscripts were sent to the monastery from Selymbria in 1462–63: P. Magdalino, "Byzantine Churches in Selymbria," *DOP* 32 (1978), 314.

Besides the Vienna Dioscurides, other illuminated manuscripts also changed owners after 1204. The early eleventh-century Psalter of Basil II received Easter tables for the years 1206 to 1225, possibly suggesting a new provenance. Thereafter, it too may have remained in Constantinople, for a Greek entry notes that in the fifteenth century it belonged to a monastery of the Peribleptos, possibly to be associated with the establishment of that name in the capital. Cardinal Bessarion acquired the Psalter later in the century.²⁰ Secondly, that large, handsome Gospel book in Parma, Palatina 5, has Greek entries from the years 1230 and 1231, indicative perhaps of new ownership. The subsequent history of the manuscript is not known until it reaches Lucca and the possession of a mercantile family prominent from the fifteenth century.²¹ In the case of a copy of the homilies of John Chrysostom on Matthew, presently Mt. Sinai cod. 364, ownership, but again not location changed. Equipped with well-known portraits of Constantine IX Monomachos, the empress Zoe, and her sister Theodora, the manuscript was probably given by Constantine to the monastery of St. George of Mangana, which he had founded in Constantinople. Indeed a thirteenth-century hand has "catalogued" the manuscript as follows: "hic liber est quintus monasterii beati georgii de mangana in Constantinopoli."²² Such an entry must date between the initial occupation of the monastery by Latin clergy in 1207 and the city's return to Greek possession in 1261.²³ What happened to the manuscript during the late Middle Ages is not known, but it probably remained in the East, because it was corrected in Greek by a fourteenth-century hand and is next documented in sixteenth-century Crete.²⁴ In sum, the Latin occupation disrupted patronage and libraries. Yet I have found minimal evidence that illustrated Greek manuscripts were as yet being taken from Byzantium to Italy, even in the case of a book such as the Sinai Chrysostom, which belonged to an institution controlled by the papacy. The exceptions that I can deduce are worth contemplating, because they suggest the singularity and the significance of these objects in late medieval Italy.

My first example concerns the famous Cotton Genesis, that fifth-century Greek manuscript studied in great detail by Professors Kurt Weitzmann and Herbert Kessler in their 1986 book and represented with Sir Robert Cotton in a contemporary portrait, a by then venerable tradition of depicting a man of culture with an illuminated manuscript.²⁵ For more than a century now, we have known that this early Byzantine codex or a sister manuscript was the model for the atrium mosaics at the church of San Marco in

²⁰T. G. Leporace and E. Mioni, *Cento Codici Bessarionei* (Venice, 1968), 33–34; Cutler, *Aristocratic Psalters*, 115. On the Peribleptos monastery in Constantinople and its library, see Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, III, pt. 1, 218–22.

²¹E. Martini, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci esistenti nelle Biblioteche Italiane*, I (Milan, 1893), 152. According to a note by the librarian Perreau, the manuscript belonged to the Bonvisi family of Lucca. Lorenzo Buonvisi, a Lucchese merchant of the 15th century, was the founder of the family's fortunes. Members of the family remained prominent for several centuries. See *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 15 (Rome, 1972), 289–359.

²²K. Weitzmann and G. Galavaris, *The Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai: The Illuminated Greek Manuscripts*, I (Princeton, 1990), 65–67, fig. 185.

²³Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique*, III, pt. 1, 71–72.

²⁴D. Harlfinger et al., *Specimina Sinaitica* (Berlin, 1983), 23–24.

²⁵K. Weitzmann and H. L. Kessler, *The Cotton Genesis: British Library Codex Cotton Otho B.VI* (Princeton, 1986), frontispiece and text fig. 4. Cf. Raphael's portrait of Pope Leo X, posed with his hand resting on what appears to be a late Gothic illuminated manuscript: W. Kelber, *Raphael von Urbino* (Stuttgart, 1979), pl. 99.

Venice, mosaics that date from the 1220s. Weitzmann and Kessler made considerable progress in tidying up the provenance of the Cotton Genesis. In the process, they were able to demonstrate that this very manuscript was the source for the mosaics and that it remained in Venice until the second quarter of the sixteenth century.²⁶ The Cotton Genesis might have reached Venice as a consequence of its domination of a quarter and an eighth of the Byzantine Empire or through its extensive trading contacts with Egypt, but neither myself nor anyone else can document the manuscript's whereabouts before about 1220. At some unknown date, it was joined in Venice by a second early Byzantine illustrated Genesis, the purple manuscript in Vienna. As Buchthal explained,²⁷ a note in a northern Italian dialect was added to the manuscript in the fourteenth century, the same period in which details of its miniatures were copied in Venetian miniatures. Thanks to the work of these scholars, we now understand how both Genesis manuscripts were used to construct an ancient past for a nouveau riche city.²⁸

Besides the Cotton Genesis, the only other illuminated Greek manuscript that I know to have been in what we now think of as Italy during the thirteenth century is an eleventh-century Gospel book in the Vatican, graecus 756. It entered the Vatican Library in 1583, but we know a bit more about its earlier provenance. Buchthal discovered that its miniature of the four evangelists was copied in a Latin manuscript produced in crusader Jerusalem during the third quarter of the twelfth century.²⁹ From the crusader kingdom, Vat. gr. 756 made its way to Sicily. In her Harvard dissertation, Rebecca Corrie demonstrates that precise details of one miniature in Vat. gr. 756 were copied in an elaborate Sicilian manuscript of the thirteenth century, the Conradin Bible, now in the Walters Art Gallery.³⁰ In addition, an added folio in the manuscript, dated 1294, pertains to the monastery of San Salvatore in Messina.³¹ Perhaps further research into the prove-

²⁶Weitzmann and Kessler, *Cotton Genesis*, 3–6.

²⁷H. Buchthal, *Historia Troiana: Studies in the History of Mediaeval Secular Illustration* (London, 1971), 47–52.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 53–67.

²⁹H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957), 26.

³⁰R. Corrie, "The Conradin Bible, Ms. 152, The Walters Art Gallery: Manuscript Illumination in a Thirteenth-Century Italian Atelier" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1986), 296–97. A second illustrated Byzantine manuscript, Palermo, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. Dep. Museo 4, a copy of the Psalms and New Testament illuminated in the Decorative Style, might have been in Sicily even before the 13th century, if a 17th- or 18th-century note can be trusted. It states that the manuscript had belonged to Empress Constanza, possibly the mother of emperor Frederick II, who herself was a nun in the convent of San Salvatore in Palermo. See Martini, *Catalogo di manoscritti greci*, I, 142; O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (New York, 1950), 410; Cutler, *Aristocratic Psalters*, 61. The manuscript properly belongs to that extensive group of later 12th-century manuscripts, assembled by Annemarie Weyl Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, 19, 273–74. Because the subgroup to which the Palermo manuscripts belongs can be generally localized in Cyprus or Palestine, specifically Jerusalem (*ibid.*, 20–28), one wonders if this manuscript, like Vat. gr. 756, might also have come from the Holy Land. But there is more than a little supposition here. In particular, the 18th-century entry has not inspired confidence in earlier authors: cf. Demus, *Mosaics*.

³¹R. Devreesse, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae: Codices Vaticani graeci*, III (Vatican, 1950), 274. The Latin script on this folio (fol. 1v) and another at the end (fol. 301) is written vertically, meaning that the folios have been turned 90 degrees and inserted. Thus the folios, strictly speaking, do not, by themselves, establish the manuscript in Messina in the late 13th century, contrary to what has been inferred from Devreesse's description. The folios should probably be associated with the rebinding of the manuscript in 1583. In that year, Francesco Akkidas of Messina gave this and three other Greek manuscripts to Pope Gregory XIII. The donation is commemorated by a prominent Greek inscription on the front and back covers. On Akkidas and his manuscripts, see P. Canart, *Les Vaticani graeci, 1487–1962: notes et documents pour l'histoire d'un fonds de manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Vaticane*, ST 284 (Vatican, 1979), 173–91. Canart attributes the binding to Messina (p. 178).

nance of Greek manuscripts in southern Italian or Sicilian collections would yield other examples of illustrated books imported from Byzantium; one promising collection to investigate would be the San Salvatore monastery, the most significant Greek establishment in Sicily.³²

But as mentioned above, I prefer to look more closely at the acquisition of illuminated Byzantine manuscripts in central and northern Italy during the fourteenth century.³³ In that region during the second half of the century, there appear two illustrated Greek manuscripts, whose subsequent histories and thus historical receptions can be traced in some detail. The first is a Gospel lectionary that has belonged to the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena since 1786 (cod. X.IV.1). Written and illuminated in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, the manuscript is decorated with four evangelist portraits and encased in an elaborate enameled cover, which Paul Hetherington has studied.³⁴ The manuscript itself and its provenance have recently been analyzed by Giovanna Derenzini.³⁵ The book's provenance is its most important aspect, not only in the present context. Whereas its decoration is comparatively modest for a period that devoted special attention to the illustration of the Gospel lectionary, the surviving documentation about the book's acquisition by the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala in Siena is without parallel.

The transaction took place in Venice on May 28, 1359, and involved on the one side Andrea di Grazia, the procurator of the hospital, and on the other, Pietro di Giunta Torrigiani of Signa. Numerous objects were involved besides the Greek lectionary, the most important being a major cache of relics that Pietro had brought from Constantinople.³⁶ Included with the relics was documentation from 1357 as to their authenticity in the form of testimonials from Latin bishops in Pera.³⁷ In that earlier context, the manuscript was not mentioned, either because the point at issue was the legitimacy of the relics, not the manuscript, or because Pietro did not then own the manuscript. How-

³²On collections of Greek manuscripts in Sicily, see H. Buchthal, "A School of Miniature Painting in Norman Sicily," *Art of the Mediterranean World, A.D. 100 to 1400* (Washington, D.C., 1983), 60, with further references. Most of the manuscripts from San Salvatore are now in the Biblioteca Universitaria of Messina, and at least one of its illuminated volumes was produced outside of Sicily or southern Italy. It is San Salvatore 51, a rare illustrated Octoechos from the group studied by Annemarie Weyl Carr and attributed by her to Cyprus or Palestine and to the end of the 12th century. See her *Byzantine Illumination*, 69–79, 225, and "Illuminated Musical Manuscripts in Byzantium: A Note on the Late Twelfth Century," *Gesta* 28 (1989), 41–52. An 11th-century copy of the homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus, first documented in Constantinople in the late 14th century and later at the San Salvatore monastery, is now in Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Canon. gr. 74: I. Hutter, *Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften*, 3.1 (Stuttgart, 1982), 77. It has only minimal decoration. Also in Oxford are manuscripts of southern Italian origin that once were in the monastery: *ibid.*, 110, 111, 154.

³³In addition to the manuscripts discussed below, I would also note that the illustrated Nicander in Paris, Bibl. Nat. suppl. gr. 247, has brief Latin entries by a 14th-century Italian hand, according to H. Omont, *Miniatures des plus anciens manuscrits grecs de la Bibliothèque Nationale du VI^e au XIV^e siècle* (Paris, 1929), 34. Such notes, of course, may or may not indicate that the manuscript was then in Italy.

³⁴P. Hetherington, "Byzantine Enamels on a Venetian Book-cover," *CahArch* 27 (1978), 117–45.

³⁵See G. Derenzini, "Esame paleografico del codice X.IV.1 della Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati e contributo documentale alla storia del 'Tesoro' dello Spedale di Santa Maria della Scala," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'Università di Siena* 8 (1987), 59–74. In regard to the acquisition of this manuscript, she corrects many details of previous accounts, all of which now must be approached with caution. She also has written "Il codice X.IV.1 della Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena," *Milione* 1 (1988), 307–25.

³⁶Text in Derenzini, "Esame," 59–69.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 69–72.

ever, given that the Siena lectionary was the product of a Constantinopolitan scriptorium and that such books were not especially common in Italy even by the later fourteenth century, it is reasonable to suppose that Pietro did possess the manuscript and that he brought the relics and the manuscript with its ornate cover to Venice sometime between 1357 and 1359.³⁸

At the macrocosmic level, these transactions exemplify economic patterns that prevailed across the Mediterranean during the fourteenth century. Firstly, Pietro di Giunta Torrigiani had obtained by some means Byzantine objects, which he imported from Constantinople to Venice and then resold, just as Italian merchants bought other commodities in Constantinople for resale in Venice at a profit. Indeed, the economic historians Angeliki Laiou and Nicolas Oikonomides have shown how the Italians controlled the most profitable long-distance trade in the eastern Mediterranean during the period.³⁹ Secondly, the details of these exchanges were set down in legal documents and duly witnessed, just like the numerous transactions that fill the account books of Italian notaries.⁴⁰ Thus these objects were, in fact, little different from other commodities; hence the real need to avoid the appearance of simony, which is precisely this commodification of the holy. Thirdly, we see Venice serving as the port of entry for a Greek manuscript into Italy and Europe. Venice would continue to play that role for several centuries. In the sixteenth century, François I, for example, obtained many Greek manuscripts through his ambassador in Venice, and the Cotton Genesis, we have just noted, left Venice for England in the same period.⁴¹

Finally, it is important to entertain the possibility that the Siena lectionary was valued in Italy not so much for its Greek text or for its Byzantine evangelist portraits, but for its enameled cover. After all, this codex is not traveling in the company of other books, but with relics and with objects of high material cost. As usual in such matters, medieval aesthetics and economics would have placed a higher value on materials than on workmanship, and thus the cover would have been preferred over the miniatures inside. Indeed, Pietro di Giunta Torrigiani is said to offer “unum librum Evangeliorum in lingua Greca fulcitum auro et argento cum smaltis.”⁴² If, as I believe likely, Pietro had brought

³⁸Although not an expert on Byzantine and Venetian metalwork, I understand the production history of the Siena lectionary as follows: Written and decorated in Constantinople in the eleventh century, it received a new cover in the Palaeologan period, perhaps the 14th century, made of reused Byzantine enamels. For his part, Hetherington (“Enamels,” 127) accepts the enamels as Byzantine, but believes that the vine pattern in the field of the cover is not Byzantine, but byzantinizing and best localized in Venice as early as the first half of the 13th century. He too thinks that the manuscript was in Constantinople in 1357, and thus he has the manuscript going from Venice to Constantinople (from which it would have come sometime earlier), and then being taken back to Venice by Pietro. Details of Hetherington’s account have to be modified in light of Derenzini’s study, but his basic premises should also be reformulated in my opinion. Trade in deluxe Greek manuscripts from east to west was quite rare in the 13th century, as I have tried to show, and is without precedent in the other direction.

³⁹A. E. Laiou-Thomadakis, “The Byzantine Economy in the Mediterranean Trade System: Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries,” *DOP* 34–35 (1980–81), 177–222; N. Oikonomides, *Hommes d'affaires grecs et latins à Constantinople (XIIIe–XVe siècles)* (Montreal, 1979), 83–86.

⁴⁰For this period, see the materials assembled in the essays of Michel Balard and Angeliki E. Laiou in Balard et al., *Les Italiens à Byzance* (Paris, 1987).

⁴¹See the articles of Nigel Wilson, Jean Irigoin, and Paul Canart, in *Venezia, Centro di mediazione tra Oriente e Occidente* (as in note 10), 381–441.

⁴²Derezini, “Esame,” 62.

the object described from Constantinople to Venice, he would have brought it to a center that had long appreciated what we call the “decorative arts” of Byzantium.

Many of these objects had a second life in Venice, as they were incorporated into local rites and institutions. In her 1987 Harvard dissertation, Rane Katzstein, for example, explores the fourteenth-century reuse of some of the most famous Byzantine enameled book covers in existence, the covers that formerly protected a set of three Latin service books. These decorated manuscripts were made for the altar of the church of San Marco in the second quarter of the fourteenth century. Katzstein is able to show that the manuscripts, each of a different size, were made to fit the covers, not vice versa, and further she associates the project with Doge Andrea Dandolo’s refashioning of the Pala d’Oro and its earlier Byzantine enamels between 1343 and 1345.⁴³ Given this evident appreciation of the covers of deluxe Byzantine manuscripts, if not necessarily their contents—we know nothing about the Greek manuscripts that once filled these covers—it is surprising that the Sienese also wanted to obtain the lectionary and the important relics for their hospital. And the terms offered Pietro di Giunta Torrigiani were so generous as to overcome resistances of almost any sort.⁴⁴

The second illustrated Greek manuscript that also most likely came to Italy in the fourteenth century is the famous *Menologium* of Basil II (Vat. gr. 1613). Its first Italian owner was a minor Genoese lawyer and diplomat, one Bartolomeo di Jacopo, who identified himself in a prayer that he inscribed at the beginning of the manuscript. This prayer and Bartolomeo’s ownership of the manuscript has recently been studied in detail by Leandro Ventura.⁴⁵ Bartolomeo entered the service of his city, Genoa, in 1360 and over a long and successful career was its ambassador in Avignon, Florence, Castile, and Milan. In 1365, he was the consul of the Genoese colony in Caffa,⁴⁶ and Ventura suggests that Bartolomeo may have purchased the *Menologium* in Constantinople during transit to Crimea. Thanks to inventories made after Bartolomeo’s death in 1389, we know the contents of the libraries at his residences in Genoa and Pavia, the *Menologium* most likely being kept at the latter. Ventura speculates that the manuscript may have subsequently passed to the Visconti and Sforza collections.⁴⁷

The history that Ventura reconstructs from Bartolomeo’s prayer is at odds with what has been obtained from a note written on folio 1r in the late sixteenth century.⁴⁸ Prece-

⁴³R. A. Katzstein, “Three Liturgical Manuscripts from San Marco: Art and Patronage in Mid-Trecento Venice” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1987), 232–52.

⁴⁴L. Banchi thought the price paid was absurdly high: H. W. van Os, *Vecchietta and the Sacristy of the Siena Hospital Church* (s Gravenhage, 1974), 89 n. 13. What Pietro gained for his family can be contextualized through the wage and prices reported in R. A. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 1980).

⁴⁵L. Ventura, “A proposito delle trasmissioni del *Menologio di Basilio II* (codice vaticano greco 1613),” *Accademie e Biblioteche d’Italia* 55 (1989), 35–39. See also the entry, “Bartolomeo di Iacopo,” by G. Pistarino in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 6 (Rome, 1964), 727–28, with further references. Ventura’s article was brought to my attention by Ihor Ševčenko, and I am most grateful. The definitive studies on the *Menologium* remain the classic articles of Prof. Ševčenko, “The Illuminators of the *Menologium* of Basil II,” *DOP* 16 (1962), 243–76, and “On Pantoleon the Painter,” *JÖB* 21 (1972), 241–50.

⁴⁶He duly appears in the list of consuls tabulated by M. Balard, *La Romanie génoise*, II (Rome, 1978), 902.

⁴⁷Ventura, “Trasmissioni,” 36–37.

⁴⁸C. Giannelli, *Codices Vaticani Graeci: Codices 1485–1683* (Vatican, 1950), 277. I note that the folio numbers given by Ventura and Giannelli do not agree. I report the former’s.

dence has, heretofore, been accorded the second notice.⁴⁹ According to it, the manuscript was sent to Ludovico Sforza, duke of Milan, from Constantinople “con molta solennità.” Ludovico gave it to a favorite associate, Giovanni Battista Sfondrato, who, it is stated, was the father of Francesco Sfondrato, and the grandfather of Niccolò Sfondrato “hora cardinale.” Cardinal Sfondrato or his librarian is thus the author of the entry, which must have been written between 1583, when he assumed that office, and 1590, when he became Pope Gregory XIV.⁵⁰ Such a note defines the manuscript as a family heirloom and, at the same time, embellishes its history at the Sforza court, for the ultimate benefit, naturally, of the cardinal and his family. At the death of Gregory XIV, the manuscript passed to the papal nephew and cardinal, Paolo Emilio Sfondrato. In 1615, he finally took the *Menologium* out of the family’s possession, by giving it to Pope Paul V Borghese, who promptly placed it in the Vatican Library, thereby ending its generational migration. The manuscript’s possession by the Sfondrato family in the sixteenth century and its subsequent history in the Vatican during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries belongs to a pattern of historical reception that differed markedly from the later Middle Ages. Thus by the sixteenth century, an illustrated Byzantine manuscript had become an object of prestige in an economy of gift-giving at princely and ecclesiastical courts and, in the following century, an honored addition to a major European library, whereupon it entered the realm of scholarly exchange in which it exists to the present. What made possible these shifts in status from Bartolomeo di Jacopo to Lodovico Sforza and to the Sfondrati family is the rising prestige of illustrated Greek manuscripts during the quattrocento, the period to which I now turn.

2. 1400–1450

In our world, histories are often subdivided by centuries, as if author and audience, like the ancient Pythagoreans, are persuaded and reassured by the power of numbers to reveal fundamental truths. Skepticism about such neat and tidy bundles of time is warranted in all instances. Yet it does so happen that the years around 1400 witnessed a fundamental change in the Italian appreciation of Greek culture and the manuscripts that transmitted it, for in 1397, Manuel Chrysoloras came from Constantinople to teach Greek in Florence. Staying only three years, a brief interlude in a career primarily spent in the diplomatic service of Byzantium,⁵¹ this visiting professor had a profound impact upon his students and upon the course of Italian humanism. Not only did he write the definitive and “best-selling” textbook for the study of Greek and quickly attracted devoted students,⁵² but he also brought to Florence Greek manuscripts, some of which he

⁴⁹E.g., most recently Cologne, Erzbischöflichen Diözesanmuseum, *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Liturgie und Andacht im Mittelalter* (Stuttgart, 1992), 114.

⁵⁰Ventura, “Trasmigrazioni,” 38.

⁵¹That career is reviewed by G. T. Dennis, *The Letters of Manuel II Palaeologus* (Washington, 1977), xxxv–xxxvii.

⁵²On Chrysoloras’ visit, see R. Weiss, “Gli inizi dello studio del greco a Firenze,” in his *Medieval and Humanist Greek: Collected Essays* (Padua, 1977), 227–54; and N. G. Wilson, *From Byzantium to Italy: Greek Studies in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1992), 8–12. In his autobiography, Leonardo Bruni eloquently describes the lure of Chrysoloras’ teaching, a matter discussed in J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, I (Leiden, 1990), 29–33. Also see I. Thomson, “Manuel Chrysoloras and the Early Italian Renaissance,” *GRBS* 7 (1966), 63–82.

left behind. Two particular manuscripts, one classical and the other biblical, suggest the potentials and the pitfalls of this material for my narrative.

The former, presently Vat. Urb. gr. 82, is a grand codex of the *Geography* of Ptolemy furnished with the requisite maps and written about a century earlier in Constantinople.⁵³ Although the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci claims that the humanist Palla Strozzi (d. 1462) sent to Greece for the manuscript,⁵⁴ Strozzi himself states otherwise in his will. Leaving the manuscript to his sons, he instructs them not to alienate it, because this was the book, which Manuel Chrysoloras, "Greek of Constantinople," had brought when he came to Florence in 1397.⁵⁵ In spite of his wishes, the book rather quickly found its way to the vast library being assembled by Federigo da Montefeltro (d. 1482), count and later duke of Urbino. From there, the book passed with the rest of the Urbino manuscripts to the Vatican Library in the seventeenth century. Such a manuscript is thus well documented and also well studied, thanks to a three-volume publication of 1932.⁵⁶

In contrast, the second manuscript, owned by Palla Strozzi and said by him to have belonged to Chrysoloras, is a copy of the four Gospels, and it remains unidentified. In his will of 1462, Palla Strozzi leaves a Greek Gospel book, together with other manuscripts, mostly Greek, to the monastery of San Giustina in Padua.⁵⁷ The Gospel book is noted in the inventory of Strozzi's collection of 1431 and is later described in the will as a "little volume" written with the most beautiful Greek letters on the finest parchment and bound with boards covered with a very old and worn gold fabric.⁵⁸ The description would appear to be of a Gospel book of smaller dimensions, as private manuscripts were want to be, and bound with expensive fabric over wood, a technique seen in a Grottaferata manuscript of the writings of a Chrysoloras contemporary, Emperor Manuel II, to be discussed shortly. Diller reasonably concludes that it is a manuscript "de luxe."⁵⁹ Regrettably nothing further can be said about this manuscript or about an "evangelia" that was owned by the contemporary humanist Guarino Guarini (d. 1460).⁶⁰

Guarino was also a student of Chrysoloras and had translated his grammar book. He followed his mentor back to Constantinople and lived in his household for five years. Over the years, Guarino amassed a collection of Greek manuscripts, which are known

⁵³ Illustrations in J. Fischer, *Claudii Ptolemaei Geographiae: Codex Urbinas Graecus 82*, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1932).

⁵⁴ V. da Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. Aulo Greco, II (Florence, 1976), 140.

⁵⁵ V. Fanelli, "I libri de Messer Palla di Nofri Strozzi (1372–1462)," *Convivium* (1949), 65. See also A. Diller, "The Greek Codices of Palla Strozzi and Guarino Veronese," *JWarb* 24 (1961), 316. More recent literature is reported in P. Eleuteri and P. Canart, *Scrittura greca nell'umanesimo italiano* (Milan, 1991), 30–31.

⁵⁶ As in note 53. Most recently see O. A. W. Dilke, in J. B. Harley and D. Woodward, *The History of Cartography* (Chicago, 1987), 269–70; N. M. Swerdlow, "The Recovery of the Exact Sciences of Antiquity: Mathematics, Astronomy, Geography," in *Rome Reborn*, ed. Anthony Grafton (Washington, D.C., 1993), 158; A. E. Laiou, "On Political Geography: The Black Sea of Pachymeres," in *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol*, ed. R. Beaton and C. Roueché (Aldershot, Hampshire, 1993), 95.

⁵⁷ G. Fiocco, "La casa di Palla Strozzi," *Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, ser. 8: *Memorie, Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche* 5 (1954), 376; idem, "La biblioteca di Palla Strozzi," *Studi di bibliografia e di storia in onore di Tammaro de Marinis*, II (Vatican, 1964), 297.

⁵⁸ Fiocco, "Biblioteca," 297: "Uno volumetto di Vangeli cioè e quattro Evangelisti in greco bonissima e bellissima lettera greca e membrane bellissime. fu di messer manuel Crisolora greco di constantinopoli el qual di là venne ad insegnar greco a firenze nel 1397 coperto dassi e drappi doro molto antico e logoro."

⁵⁹ Diller, "Greek Codices," 315.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 318.

from an undated and exceedingly cursory inventory. Among the manuscripts that might conceivably have been decorated, there are, in addition to the evangelia, texts by John Chrysostom and Gregory Nazianzenus and a Psalter in Greek and Latin.⁶¹ Diller suggested that the evangelia might be the same as Wolfenbüttel codex 3077, a twelfth-century Gospel book, which does happen to contain evangelist portraits and decorated canon tables, but the published description of the manuscript provides no support for the attribution.⁶² Finally, it was yet another student of Chrysoloras, Niccolò Niccoli (d. 1437), who came to possess the largest contemporary collection of Greek manuscripts, even though he does not appear to have been one of the master's better pupils.⁶³ As might be expected, Niccolò's library had strong classical holdings, but it also had perhaps as many ecclesiastical texts. Nevertheless, only a few have even minimal decoration.⁶⁴

Book collectors, such as Niccolò Niccoli, depended upon a small number of agents, who began in these years to travel to the eastern Mediterranean in search of Greek manuscripts. Easily the most successful of these purveyors of books was the Sicilian Giovanni Aurispa (d. 1459), who made two highly productive trips to the East in search of Greek texts.⁶⁵ From the first came a manuscript of Sophocles and Euripides and manuscripts of other classical authors.⁶⁶ The second voyage (1421–1423) yielded the prodigious number of 238 classical texts, and conveyed scholarly immortality on a person, who otherwise was a minor humanist. Wilson, for example, considers the year that Aurispa returned to be “a critical point in the development of Greek studies,”⁶⁷ and it presumably was also critical for Aurispa's personal finances. A number of these books were bought by Niccolò, a learned humanist, but also a wealthy man, who lavished large sums on his library.⁶⁸ While Aurispa was in Constantinople, John VIII Palaeologos, then co-emperor with his father Manuel II, made Aurispa his secretary and gave him copies of texts by Procopios and Xenophon.⁶⁹ Aurispa also visited the Petra monastery, which was

⁶¹ H. Omont, “Les manuscrits grecs de Guarino de Vérone et la bibliothèque de Ferrare,” *Revue des bibliothèques* 2 (1892), 79–80. Diller (“Greek Codices,” 318) says that the Gregory manuscript is “possibly” Wolfenbüttel 3651, but I find no supporting evidence in O. von Heinemann, *Die Handschriften der Herzoglichen Bibliothek zu Wolfenbüttel*, II: *Die Augusteischen Handschriften* 5 (Wolfenbüttel, 1903), 100–101; or in D. Harlfinger et al., *Griechische Handschriften und Aldinen* (Wolfenbüttel, 1978), 45–47. To judge from the latter, the Wolfenbüttel manuscript is early Palaeologan in date and has a single illuminated headpiece. As Ian Thomson notes, the inventory published by Omont and the general state of Guarino's library is problematic, and it is unlikely that he returned from Constantinople with many Greek manuscripts: “Some Notes on the Contents of Guarino's Library,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 (1976), 169–71.

⁶² Diller, “Greek Codices,” 318; von Heinemann, *Handschriften*, II.4, 199–200.

⁶³ See B. L. Ullman and P. A. Stadter, *The Public Library of Renaissance Florence* (Padua, 1972), 84. The total of Greek and Latin manuscripts in his library may have been more than eight hundred: *ibid.*, 60.

⁶⁴ I note that a manuscript of Chrysostom (Florence, Bibl. Laur. San Marco 687) of A.D. 943 is included in I. Spatharakis, *Corpus of Dated Illuminated Greek Manuscripts to the Year 1453* (Leiden, 1981), 10–11, as is a New Testament (London, Brit. Lib. Add. 11837) of 1357: *ibid.*, 64–65. The collection is tabulated by Ullman and Stadter, *Renaissance Florence*, 79–81.

⁶⁵ In general on Aurispa, see R. Sabbadini, *Carteggio di Giovanni Aurispa* (Rome, 1931); the article by E. Bigi in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1962), 593–95; and A. Franceschini, *Giovanni Aurispa e la sua biblioteca* (Padua, 1976).

⁶⁶ Sabbadini, *Carteggio*, xiv.

⁶⁷ Wilson, *From Byzantium*, 25–26.

⁶⁸ Ullmann and Stadter, *Renaissance Florence*, 94–95; L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390–1460* (Princeton, 1963), 112–16.

⁶⁹ Sabbadini, *Carteggio*, xiv–xv, 11.

nearby the imperial palace, and studied its Dioscurides manuscript, which had been annotated and rebound only a few years earlier in 1405/6 by the Byzantine bibliophile John Chortasmenos.⁷⁰ Describing it as a handsome book in a letter of 1430 to Ambrogio Traversari, Aurispa praised its antiquity, noted its pictures of plants, roots, animals, and serpents, and remarked on the annotations.⁷¹

Besides the large cache of classical authors, Aurispa also obtained forty religious manuscripts, which were dispatched to Messina. Among them were six codices of Symeon Metaphrastes, the homilies of Chrysostom, a Psalter, and what probably was a Gospel lectionary.⁷² Any one might have been decorated, although none can be identified today. In another letter to Traversari from 1430, Aurispa does say, however, a bit more about his lectionary. This Εὐαγγέλια Κυριακά, written in majuscules, is an “opus mirae pulchritudinis et antiquitatis lucidae,” giving more credence to the possibility of its being decorated.⁷³ Such uncial lectionaries typically date to the tenth or eleventh century and have at least a bit of decoration.

By about 1430, Greek manuscripts, therefore, were becoming more numerous, at least in Florence, and the teaching of Greek was being established in multiple centers. Yet for the concerns of this article, all of the above is prelude to the 1430s and to a particular concatenation of events and convergence of Eastern and Western interests by which the number of Byzantine religious manuscripts in Italian hands rises sharply. I refer to the attempts by the Councils of Basel (1431–37) and Ferrara/Florence (1438–39) to unite the Eastern and Western churches and also to the urgent need of the Byzantines to obtain Western allies. While the Council of Florence may have been the “success that failed,”⁷⁴ in the sense that it failed to establish a permanent union, it did bring together the ecclesiastical elites of two cultures just before one was to expire forever. More specifically, it gave the Western church a strong impetus to collect Greek manuscripts, and to translate the Eastern Fathers, if for no other reason than to be able to counter arguments from Greek sources.

During the council, discussions about Greek manuscripts, especially copies of St. Basil’s “Adversus Eunomium,” were prolonged. Actual texts were brought forth and made available for examination by the other side.⁷⁵ This regard for the tangibility of manuscript evidence recalls the attention paid to books centuries before at the Seventh Ecumenical Council, which also might be termed aptly, if anachronistically “a council of antiquaries and paleographers.”⁷⁶ At one point during the later proceedings, the Latin spokesman attempted to legitimate his version of the crucial text of St. Basil by declaring that it was on parchment, not paper, and had been brought from Constantinople by Nicolaus Cusanus.⁷⁷ The latter would have been well known to all in attendance, because

⁷⁰H. Hunger, *Johannes Chortasmenos (ca. 1370–ca. 1436/37): Briefe, Gedichte und kleine Schriften. Einleitung, Regesten, Prosopographie, Text* (Vienna, 1969), 15, 26, 51.

⁷¹Sabbadini, *Carteggio*, 67–68.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 11, 67, 69, 71–72.

⁷³*Ibid.*, 71–72.

⁷⁴J. Gill, *Personalities of the Council of Florence* (Oxford, 1964), 1–14.

⁷⁵J. Gill, *The Council of Florence* (Cambridge, 1959), 150.

⁷⁶C. Mango, “The Availability of Books in the Byzantine Empire, A.D. 750–850,” *Byzantine Books and Bookmen* (Washington, D.C., 1975), 30.

⁷⁷J. Gill, *Quae supersunt actorum graecorum Concilii Florentini*, II (Rome, 1953), 297.

he had been one of the papal legates, responsible for making the final negotiations in Constantinople for the attendance of the Greek delegation, but there were others who had preceded him.

In particular, John Stojković of Ragusa had been sent to Constantinople by the Council of Basel, and he labored there on its behalf from September 1435 to November 1437, while residing at the monastery of St. Theodosia, possibly the present-day Gul Camii.⁷⁸ In spite of becoming friendly with the patriarch Joseph II—both were Bulgarian⁷⁹—John was ultimately not successful in persuading the emperor to join the Council of Basel's discussions about church unity.⁸⁰ In order to verify quotations, the council had also commissioned John to obtain Greek manuscripts. On February 9, 1436, a few months after his arrival, John replied to Basel that it was difficult to discover original books of the Greeks and to find adequate copyists, but he and his associates were continuing to look.⁸¹ They succeeded admirably. To copy manuscripts, John secured the services of the scribe Georgios Baiophoros.⁸² He could easily have learned of the latter's talents from Cristoforo Garatone (d. 1448), then the apostolic nuncio to the Orient, a shipmate of John Stojković on his journey to Constantinople in 1435, and an experienced humanist, who spoke Greek and had collected and commissioned Greek manuscripts in Constantinople during the previous decade.⁸³ John was also successful in purchasing older manuscripts, and he even marked some with the prices he paid.

In one manuscript, a Psalter with commentary by St. Basil, John wrote that he bought the book in Constantinople on July 14, 1436, for nine hyperpyra and nine ducatelos,⁸⁴ a price more or less in line with the cost of other manuscripts in Constantinople in those years.⁸⁵ In 1436, a bushel of grain is reported to have cost one hyperpyron.⁸⁶ Thus for

⁷⁸ Janin, *Géographie ecclésiastique* III, pt. 1, 144; T. F. Mathews, *The Byzantine Churches of Istanbul: A Photographic Survey* (University Park, Penn., 1976), 128–29.

⁷⁹ V. Laurent, *Les "Mémoires" du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Eglise de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)* (Paris, 1971), 160–61.

⁸⁰ Gill, *Council*, 82–83.

⁸¹ E. Cecconi, *Studi storici sul Concilio di Firenze*, pt. 1: *Antecedenti del concilio* (Florence, 1869), ccx–ccxi.

⁸² E. Gamillscheg, "Zur Geschichte einer Gregor-von-Nazianz-Handschrift (Basil. A.VII.1 = gr. 34)," *Codices Manuscripti* 5 (1979), 104–14.

⁸³ Garatone owned two manuscripts in the Vatican, gr. 19 and 21, dated 1425 and 1423, respectively, and attributed to Baiophoros by Ernst Gamillscheg: "Zur handschriftliche Überlieferung byzantinischer Schulbücher," *JÖB* 26 (1977), 215–16. He must either have commissioned them or else bought them directly from the scribe: *ibid.*, 228–29. In general on Garatone, see Gill, *Council*, 58, 63, 169; and L. Pesce, "Cristoforo Garatone trevigiano, nunzio di Eugenio IV," *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 28 (1974), 23–93. A list of Garatone's manuscripts appears in G. Mercati, *Scritti d'Isidoro il Cardinale Ruteno*, ST 46 (Rome 1926), 106–16. His manuscripts passed to the Vatican Library between 1449 and 1455: Gamillscheg, "Schulbücher," 228. While Garatone was an important collector of Greek manuscripts in Constantinople, I have not devoted greater attention to him, because all but one of his manuscripts, a copy of Gregory Nazianzenus, are classical, and none are decorated.

⁸⁴ On the manuscript, Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Auct. D.3.17, see R. W. Hunt, "Greek Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library from the Collection of John Stojković of Ragusa," *Studia Patristica*, VII (= TU 92 [Berlin, 1966]), 77. On these coins, see P. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins* (Berkeley, 1982), 342–43.

⁸⁵ Cf. Florence, Bibl. Laur. San Marco 316 bought in Constantinople in 1446 by the bishop of Cortona for six hyperpyra: Gamillscheg, "Schulbücher," 228–29; or Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Canon, gr. 100 bought by a Basileios in the 15th century for five hyperpyra: Hutter, *CBM* 3.1, 91.

⁸⁶ H. Hunger, *Schreiben und Lesen in Byzanz* (Munich, 1989), 42. There is much useful information about prices and salaries in general and for manuscripts in particular in the following articles in V. Kravari et al., *Hommes et richesses dans l'Empire byzantin*, II (Paris, 1991): J.-C. Cheynet, E. Malamut, and C. Morriçon, "Prix

the equivalent of about nine bushels of grain, John secured a well-written manuscript, decorated with gold initials and with a single headpiece, illuminated in the Laubsägestil.⁸⁷ The latter style is associated with the finest tenth-century Constantinopolitan manuscripts and suggests that the volume probably remained in the capital for nearly five hundred years. Presumably it was also in Constantinople that John acquired a copy of Elias of Crete's commentary on the homilies of St. Gregory Nazianzenus, now Basel, Universitätsbibl. A.N.I.8.⁸⁸ The only illustrated version of this text in existence, the book contains sixteen full-page miniatures that either illustrate specific homilies or serve as author portraits. According to a note in the book, this paper manuscript of 396 folios cost "cum ligatura et omnibus circha 12 iperpera."⁸⁹ Although the manuscript and its miniatures are not without their problematic aspects, the illustrations probably date to the twelfth-century.⁹⁰

From the same period but a different formal idiom is the single surviving miniature in another of John's manuscripts in Basel, Universitätsbibl. A.N.IV.2. Presently this copy of the Greek New Testament, less the Apocalypse, contains only the portrait of John, dictating his Gospel to Prochoros and accompanied by a small vignette of the Anastasis above, a combination well established by the later twelfth-century date of the manuscript.⁹¹ The manuscript may be associated with a small group of illustrated Gospel books from perhaps the 1170s and the city of Constantinople.⁹² Thus once again John purchased a manuscript that had probably long been in the capital. The acquisition and its subsequent deposit in Basel might have been of greater significance for the history of New Testament studies, if Erasmus had paid as much attention to this important textual witness as he did to others in Basel for his hasty publication of the Greek New Testament in 1516.⁹³ Thus Erasmus was only half right, when he pronounced the manuscript "more pretty than accurate."⁹⁴

et salaires à Byzance (Xe–XVe siècle)," 339–74; V. Kravari, "Note sur le prix des manuscrits (IXe–XVe siècle)," 375–84.

⁸⁷Hutter, *CBM* 1, 13.

⁸⁸C. Walter, "Un commentaire enluminé des homélies de Grégoire de Nazianze," *CahArch* 22 (1972), 115–29.

⁸⁹A. Vernet, "Les manuscrits grecs de Jean de Raguse (d. 1443)," *Basler Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 60 (1960), 91.

⁹⁰Among the problems are the date and art historical context of the illustrations and their relationship to the text of the manuscript. Walter ("Commentaire," 116) thought that the miniatures were from another manuscript. If that is the case, might they have been added when the manuscript was rebound for John Stojković, and might they be accounted among the "omnibus" that John paid for? Such musings, very much couched in the subjunctive, need to be checked by a reexamination of the actual manuscript, which I saw too many years ago to help in the present context.

⁹¹R. S. Nelson, *The Iconography of Preface and Miniature in the Byzantine Gospel Book* (New York, 1980), 25, fig. 15, with further references.

⁹²In my dissertation, "Text and Image in a Byzantine Gospel Book in Istanbul (Ecumenical Patriarchate, cod. 3)" (New York University, 1978), pp. 98–122, I argue that the miniaturist of the Basel Gospels collaborated with others decorating a two-volume set of the Psalter and the Gospels, Athens, Nat. Lib. mss. 15 and 93, and worked in a manner that closely compares with the illustrations of a Gospel book in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, cod. 3.

⁹³C. R. Gregory, *Textkritik des Neuen Testamentes*, II (Leipzig, 1902), 928–31; C. C. Tarelli, "Erasmus's Manuscripts of the Gospels," *JTS* 44 (1943), 155–62.

⁹⁴J. H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ: New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton, 1983), 130, who takes exception with the conclusions of Tarelli (as in the preceding note).

A final manuscript that belonged to John Stojković and which has at least a bit of decoration is a theological miscellany, Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Auct. E.1.6, written in the twelfth century and then restored for John while he was in Constantinople.⁹⁵ Although the manuscript's very simple headbands are not likely to find a prominent place in future histories of Byzantine ornament, the book does have the decided virtue of being well documented and well studied. Ernst Gamillscheg has identified the fifteenth-century restorer as Georgios Baiophoros, who appears to have been associated with the Petra monastery. Having acquired the Oxford miscellany for six hyperpyra and four ducatelos,⁹⁶ John loaned it to Nicolaus Cusanus, soon after the papal emissary arrived in September 1437 to negotiate the attendance of the Greeks at the Council of Ferrara/Florence.⁹⁷

Nicolaus had already gained a considerable reputation for his abilities to discover rare texts before and during the Council of Basel, and it is not surprising that he began to acquire Greek manuscripts in Constantinople.⁹⁸ Upon return from his mission, some of the manuscripts were left with friends in Ferrara and can no longer be identified.⁹⁹ At his death, those books still remaining in his library passed to the Hospital of St. Nicholas in Cues; some subsequently migrated to other institutions.¹⁰⁰ The collection that can be reconstructed includes Greek books, although none corresponds either to the manuscript cited during the Council of Florence or to another that Cardinal Cesarini mentioned as also having been brought by Nicholas from Constantinople.¹⁰¹ One manuscript in Cues, a commentary on the Gospel of John, has a figural headpiece,¹⁰² but the few other Greek manuscripts that can be traced to Nicolaus are without significant decoration with one exception, Vat. gr. 358, a Gospel book illuminated with canon tables, headpieces, and evangelist portraits.¹⁰³ According to a Latin note, reported in 1801, but now lost, the manuscript was bought in 1438 in Constantinople by Nicolaus, when he was on the papal mission to the emperor and the "Eastern Roman bishop."¹⁰⁴

While this Gospel book has several later cryptic notes in Greek, it is again reasonable to assume that Nicolaus acquired a manuscript that had remained in Constantinople since inception. According to its colophon, the book was copied by Eustathios, the "deputy of the school of the Virgin" (πρώξιμος σχολῆς παρθένου).¹⁰⁵ The latter refers to the school and copying center of the church of the Virgin Chalkoprateia in Constantinople.

⁹⁵ Hutter, *CBM* 3.1, 112–15; 3.2, figs. 294–297.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁹⁷ Gamillscheg, "Zur Geschichte," 113; A. Krchňák, "Neue Handschriftenfunde in London und Oxford," *Mitteilungen und Forschungsbeiträge der Cusanus-Gesellschaft* 3 (1963), 105–06.

⁹⁸ P. M. Watts, *Nicolaus Cusanus: A Fifteenth-Century Vision of Man* (Leiden, 1982), 3–5; Sabbadini, *Scoperte*, II, 16–27.

⁹⁹ Watts, *Cusanus*, 23–24.

¹⁰⁰ The collection is reviewed in C. Bianca, "La biblioteca romana di Niccolò Cusano," *Scrittura biblioteche e stampa a Roma nel Quattrocento* (Vatican, 1983), 669–708.

¹⁰¹ O. Kresten, *Eine Sammlung von Konzilsakten aus dem Besitze des Kardinals Isidoros von Kiev* (Vienna, 1976), 20, 82.

¹⁰² Cues 18, Gospel of John with commentary: J. Marx, *Verzeichnis der Handschriften-Sammlung des Hospitals zu Cues* (Trier, 1905), 13. I have not seen this manuscript.

¹⁰³ The manuscript is partially illustrated in M. Bonicatti, "Per una introduzione alla cultura mediobizantina di Costantinopoli," *RIASA*, n.s., 9 (1960), figs. 2, 4, 11, and discussed, 213–35.

¹⁰⁴ R. Devreesse, *Codices Vaticani Graeci, II: Codices 330–603* (Vatican, 1937), 44–45.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 44.

The church, located near Hagia Sophia, was served by her clergy, and its school was associated with the Patriarchal School at Hagia Sophia.¹⁰⁶ In 1070, Petros, γραμματικὸς τῆς σχολῆς Χαλκοπρατείων, completed a Gospel lectionary, Paris, Bibl. Nat. suppl. gr. 1096, decorated with headpieces and portraits of seated evangelists grouped together on a single page.¹⁰⁷ The Gospels that Nicholas of Cusa acquired was probably produced about the same time, because its evangelist portraits, in this case arranged more traditionally before each Gospel and accompanied by epigrams, should be assigned to the third quarter of the eleventh century, but attributed to another illuminator.¹⁰⁸

Nicolaus and his manuscripts returned to Italy on the vessels that he had arranged to transport the huge Greek delegation to the Council of Ferrara/Florence. That delegation, comprising the emperor John VIII Palaeologos, the patriarch Joseph II, prominent clergy, and many others, outfitted itself with rich and elaborate paraphernalia, so as to impress the Latins. For example, Sylvester Syropoulos, a prominent church official at Hagia Sophia, notes that the valuable treasures of the Great Church were brought along, much to the concern of some.¹⁰⁹ Syropoulos makes no specific mention of service books, but since such texts were required for the liturgy, they too must have been brought from the treasury of Hagia Sophia. Unfortunately, the only known survivor of that collection, termed the St. Sophia lectionary, was donated to the Great Church on July 6, 1438, some months after the delegation had already arrived in Italy.¹¹⁰ However, lectionaries with elaborately decorated bindings are described in an inventory of the treasury of Hagia Sophia from 1396.¹¹¹

John VIII also brought a great many books, according to Ambrogio Traversari. In a letter, written in March or April of 1438, Traversari explicitly mentions what would have interested him the most—complete editions of Plato and Plutarch and a commentary on the works of Aristotle.¹¹² The same letter states that although Bessarion left many manuscripts behind in Modon in the Morea, he did have with him a Ptolemy “cum figuris aptissimis.”¹¹³ With the possible exception of Bessarion’s library, many or most of the books brought by the Greek delegation would presumably have been taken back to Con-

¹⁰⁶R. Browning, “The Patriarchal School at Constantinople in the Twelfth Century,” *Byzantion* 32 (1962), 171–72.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., 172; Spatharakis, *Corpus*, 29, figs. 159–160.

¹⁰⁸Compare St. Petersburg, gr. 72 of 1061 (Spatharakis, *Corpus*, fig. 133). The epigrams around the miniatures of Vat. gr. 358 are those printed by H. F. von Soden, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments* I.1 (Berlin, 1902), 380–81, nos. 24–27.

¹⁰⁹Laurent, *Mémoires*, 188–89, and 8–9 for the status of Syropoulos at the patriarchate.

¹¹⁰R. S. Nelson and J. Lowden, “The Palaeologina Group: Additional Manuscripts and New Questions,” *DOP* 45 (1991), 63.

¹¹¹F. Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana*, II (Vienna, 1862), 567. None of these manuscripts can now be identified. Hagia Sophia surely possessed lectionaries in earlier centuries, and in that regard it has been recently proposed that an 11th-century lectionary in the Vatican Library, gr. 1156, was made for the patriarchate and Hagia Sophia: M.-L. Dolezal, “The Middle Byzantine Lectionary: Textual and Pictorial Expression of Liturgical Ritual” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1991). Robert Devreesse tentatively identified the latter manuscript for the first time in an inventory of 1518: *Le fonds grec de la Bibliothèque Vaticane des origines à Paul V* (Vatican, 1965), 223.

¹¹²Gill, *Council*, 163–64.

¹¹³G. Mercati, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti*, fasc. I: *Traversariana* (Vatican, 1939), 26; C. L. Stinger, *Humanism and the Church Fathers: Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439) and Christian Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance* (Albany, 1977), 210.

stantinople. As a rule, the classical texts mentioned would have lacked illumination, but Gospels, Psalters, or lectionaries of the sort that would have been carried to impress the Latins are another matter. Some may have been left for the Latin hosts, and such an explanation has recently been offered for the appearance of decorated Armenian, Ethiopian, and Arabic Gospels and Psalters in the Vatican collections during these years.¹¹⁴

In regard to illuminated manuscripts coming to Italy for this occasion, firm evidence, as usual, is wanting, but two manuscripts, possibly associated with John VIII or the council, warrant further scrutiny. The first, an eleventh-century Gospel lectionary in the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice, gr. I, 53, is presently equipped with portraits of three evangelists.¹¹⁵ In style and date, these portraits resemble the evangelists in the Gospel book of Nicolaus Cusanus and especially those in the Siena lectionary. Since the latter two books are documented as having come from Constantinople, the Venice lectionary should be assigned to the same provenance as well. With only these three evangelists, albeit proficient in every manner, ms. gr. I, 53 might be thought to deserve the brief notice that it has heretofore received in the history of Byzantine manuscript illumination. But manuscripts are not mere frames for pictures, as they appear in some art histories. Neither are they truly understandable when subdivided according to our notions of artistic genre, by which the Venice lectionary, like its counterpart in Siena, is best known for its elaborately gilded and enameled cover, perhaps the finest such example surviving from the fourteenth century.¹¹⁶ Decorated in the manner of an icon frame,¹¹⁷ or vice versa, the binding surrounds the Crucifixion and Anastasis on front and back with smaller feast scenes and medallions of saints in the borders. By this date, the themes of the two central panels had become traditional for lectionary covers.¹¹⁸ Both the lectionary and the processional icon were intended for public display and veneration, the lectionary being paraded about the church during the First Entry of the liturgy. Although direct proof is wholly lacking, it was objects such as this that figured among the treasures of Hagia Sophia during the fourteenth century.

But wherever the Venice lectionary was in the fourteenth century, it is its whereabouts during the fifteenth century that are of interest here. According to all previous commentators, including the cautious and reliable Elpidio Mioni, the Venice lectionary is said to have been a gift from Emperor John VIII to the Republic of Venice upon his arrival for the Council of Ferrara.¹¹⁹ Each author cites as evidence the testimony of Jacopo Morelli

¹¹⁴A. Hamilton, "Eastern Churches and Western Scholarship," in *Rome Reborn*, 230–32. See also G. Levi della Vida, *Ricerche sulla formazione del più antico fondo dei manoscritti orientali della Biblioteca Vaticana*, ST 92 (Vatican, 1939), 85, 91, 440.

¹¹⁵The manuscript most recently has been discussed by I. Furlan, *Codici greci illustrati della Biblioteca Marciana*, II (Milan, 1979), 9–12, pl. I, figs. 1–2, with further literature.

¹¹⁶A. Grabar in H. R. Hahnloser, ed., *Il Tesoro di San Marco*, II: *Tesoro e il museo* (Florence, 1971), 50–52; K. Wessel, *Byzantine Enamels* (Greenwich, Conn., 1967), 196–200. It should be noted that in his discussion of Byzantine covers, Grabar has switched the contents of Bibl. Marc. gr. I, 53, the manuscript under discussion here, with gr. I, 55 (*Il Tesoro*, 52–54), a manuscript to be discussed shortly.

¹¹⁷A. Grabar, *Les revêtements en or et en argent des icones byzantines du moyen âge* (Venice, 1975), 78.

¹¹⁸T. Velmans, "La couverture de l'Évangile dit de Morozov et l'évolution de la reliure byzantine," *CahArch* 28 (1979), 119–29.

¹¹⁹E. Mioni, *Bibliothecae Divi Marci Venetiarum: Codices graeci manuscripti*, I (Rome, 1967), 69; C. Castellani, *Catalogus codicum graecorum qui in Bibliothecam D. Marci Venetiarum* (Venice, 1895), 70; Furlan, *Codici greci*, II,

(d. 1819).¹²⁰ In charge of the Biblioteca Marciana from 1778, Morelli was present when the manuscript was transferred from the treasury to the library of San Marco in 1801.¹²¹ The removal from treasury to library and from the context of devotion to that of scholarship is characteristic of the age, and a similar epistemological shift affected the Siena lectionary, when it entered its local library in 1786. While Morelli is explicit about the motivations for the transferral,¹²² his reasons for associating the lectionary with John VIII remain obscure, and previous authors have left no trail of citations in Morelli's writings. Thus this author is left with more than a few questions and doubts about the provenance of the Venice manuscript.

Still I can affirm that such a gift has many precedents. In general, it had long been customary to exchange gifts in the course of diplomacy, and that custom is well documented in the Palaeologan period.¹²³ Moreover, manuscripts themselves had long circulated as diplomatic gifts, and a Gospel book, decorated with gems, was sent to the pope in the early Byzantine period.¹²⁴ John Lowden has discussed similar gifts in later times.¹²⁵ In particular, John VIII had given books to Aurispa, as noted above, and his father, Manuel II, had sent a deluxe copy of the complete works of Dionysios the Areopagite to the monastery of St. Denis, following his extensive European tour from 1399 to 1403. This "politisches Geschenk" recalls a similar gift to the monastery by Emperor Michael II in the ninth century.¹²⁶ The fifteenth-century manuscript, equipped with portraits of the imperial family, was presented to the monks in 1408 by the Byzantine ambassador, Manuel Chrysoloras, who had by then returned to diplomatic duty for the empire.¹²⁷

Thus it is entirely plausible that John VIII presented a book or books to the doge during the grandiose ceremonies attending the emperor's reception in Venice¹²⁸ and thereby reciprocated the doge's generosity toward the emperor and patriarch. While in Venice, the leaders of the Greek delegation were also given presents by the pope. Syropoulos, for example, notes that Cristoforo Garatone, acting on behalf of Eugenius IV, gave the patriarch some silver plates and a silver basin in which to wash his face.¹²⁹ Both the Latins and the Greeks were sensitive to the real and symbolic value of such ex-

10; *Biblia Patres Liturgia*, ed. T. G. Leporace (Venice, 1961), 9–10; M. Zorzi, *Venetiae quasi alterum Byzantium: Collezioni Veneziane di codici greci dalle raccolte della Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana* (Venice, 1993), 18–19.

¹²⁰C. Frati, *Dizionario bio-bibliografico dei bibliotecari e bibliofili italiani dal sec. XIV al XIX* (Florence, 1933), 379–80.

¹²¹Mioni, *Codices*, I, 69.

¹²²One of the several manuscripts involved in the exchange was the Grimani Breviary. It was to be transferred from the "tomb" of the treasury, where it would be of no use to anyone, to the better protection of the library, where it could be put to good use by "students of antiquity and of the art of drawing." R. Gallo, *Il Tesoro di S. Marco e la sua storia* (Venice, 1967), 78.

¹²³N. Oikonomides, "Byzantine Diplomacy, A.D. 1204–1453: Means and Ends," in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. J. Shepard and S. Franklin (Aldershot, 1992), 85–86.

¹²⁴J. Herrin, "Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries," *Byzantine Diplomacy* (as in note 123), 104.

¹²⁵J. Lowden, "The Luxury Book as Diplomatic Gift," *Byzantine Diplomacy* (as in note 123), 249–60.

¹²⁶K. Treu, "Byzantinische Kaiser in den Schreiberbotizen griechischer Handschriften," *BZ* 65 (1972), 25.

¹²⁷Paris, Musée du Louvre, *Byzance: L'Art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises* (Paris, 1992), 463–64, with further literature.

¹²⁸As described in Syropoulos: Laurent, *Mémoires*, 216–19.

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, 222–23.

changes. For his part, the patriarch bought a paten and chalice, elaborately crafted of gold and silver, with funds given him by Cristoforo. Accompanied by his entourage, the patriarch visited the treasury of San Marco, and their reactions to the formerly Byzantine objects, reported by Syropoulos, show that the Byzantine delegation took note of both images and inscriptions and from them drew the conclusion that the Pala d'Oro came from the Pantocrator Monastery, not Hagia Sophia, as they were told by their hosts.¹³⁰ Today, the Tesoro di San Marco also contains the so-called Unicorn of John Palaeologus, so named because of a Greek inscription that refers either to John VIII or to his fourteenth-century predecessor John V.¹³¹ The inscription is accompanied by an image of the double-headed eagle, the standard Palaeologan insignia displayed on many types of objects by this period, including the sumptuous binding of a Greek manuscript at the monastery of Grottaferrata.

The latter, containing various treatises of Emperor Manuel II and not the Gospels, as sometimes reported,¹³² is the second manuscript that has been associated with John VIII and the council. This binding, made of blue silk and silver embroidery, has in the center the double-headed eagle and in the four corners the Palaeologan monogram, another emblem long associated with the dynasty. Thus the imperial significance of contents and cover reinforce each other. Donated by Cardinal Bessarion to the monastery, the manuscript bears his ex libris and, according to some, was a gift from John VIII to Bessarion at the Council of Florence. The notion begins, as far as I know, with a suggestion in the first catalogue description of the manuscript¹³³ and is alternately treated as hypothesis¹³⁴ or fact¹³⁵ or ignored¹³⁶ by later authors. Once more such a provenance is possible, but Bessarion might also have acquired the book later in his career, perhaps even after the fall of Constantinople, when imperial collections were disrupted and at a time when he was sufficiently well established in Italy to be able to collect Greek manuscripts in quantity. Yet Jean Irigoin, who has recently assembled a group of stamped bindings with the imperial devices, concludes that such bindings, like monograms elsewhere in manuscripts, are a sign of direct association with the imperial family.¹³⁷ Presumably if a book of the writings of John's father were to be alienated from the imperial collections before 1453, the person responsible would most likely be someone like John VIII. In sum, the situation is similar to that of the foregoing lectionary in Venice. While both might be presents of John VIII from the cache of manuscripts and objects brought by the Greek delegation to Italy, I am fully aware that no amount of evidence as to the plausibility of the gifts will, by itself, ever transform either object into that gift.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 222–25.

¹³¹ A. Frolov in Hahnloser, ed., *Tesoro* (as in note 116), 89–90.

¹³² *Venezia e Bisanzio* (Venice, 1974), no. 120. The error begins with *Byzantine Art, An European Art* (Athens, 1964), 483. The contents are described in J. W. Barker, *Manuel II Palaeologus (1391–1425): A Study in Late Byzantine Statesmanship* (New Brunswick, N.J. 1969), 438.

¹³³ A. Rocchi, *Codices cryptenses seu abbatiae Cryptae Ferratae* (Grottaferrata, 1883), 501.

¹³⁴ J. Irigoin, "Un groupe de reliures byzantines au monogramme des Paléologues," *Revue française d'histoire du livre*, n.s., 36 (1982), 283.

¹³⁵ P. Hoffmann, "Une nouvelle reliure byzantine au monogramme des Paléologues (Ambrosianus M 46 sup. = GR. 512)," *Scriptorium* 39 (1985), 278.

¹³⁶ H. Belting, *Das illuminierte Buch in der spätbyzantinischen Gesellschaft* (Heidelberg, 1970), 52, 64.

¹³⁷ Irigoin, "Un groupe de reliures," 283–85. Also see Philippe Hoffmann in *Byzance: L'Art byzantin* (as in note 127), 469–70.

In addition to leaving manuscripts behind, John VIII and his entourage presumably took home souvenirs from the Italian tour, and such may be the explanation for the miniature added to a manuscript of the Psalms and the New Testament on Mt. Sinai, cod. 2123, a manuscript that Annemarie Weyl Carr dubbed a “tattered little codicological nightmare.”¹³⁸ The manuscript, according to the recent study of Giancarlo Prato and Joseph Sonderkamp,¹³⁹ contains miniatures that are both earlier and later than its 1241/42 date, but one, a portrait of John VIII, is especially relevant to the present discussion.¹⁴⁰ The portrait has been cut out of a larger sheet and pasted into the manuscript on folio 30v. The original background of the portrait has been continued onto the manuscript page, and the whole surrounded by a simple frame. The delicate brush strokes on the face, hair and beard, as well as the subtle rendition of light and shadow bespeak a formal idiom entirely different from that of Byzantine miniatures. Because the image is closely related to the medallion portrait designed by Pisanello during the Council of Ferrara/Florence, Marcell Restle justly attributed the miniature to the artist, suggesting that John VIII may have obtained it directly from Pisanello, whom he would have encountered in Ferrara.¹⁴¹ It could be argued, then, that the emperor himself once owned the manuscript. If so, he must have taken it back to Constantinople at the conclusion of the council, for its subsequent history is in the East and is allied with that of a Greek Gospel book in St. Petersburg, gr. 118. The latter contains a closely related series of miniatures and a portrait of John’s brother, Demetrios Palaeologos, the despot of the Morea until 1460 and afterwards a monk in Adrianople.¹⁴² The Sinai manuscript was later documented on the island of Chios, where it was presented to the archbishop of Sinai in 1781.¹⁴³ Chios had been a source for Greek manuscripts before and after the Ottoman conquest, and, according to a document of 1461 in Genoa, the Genoese brought books, liturgical vessels, and relics to Chios from Pera.¹⁴⁴

After the conclusion of the council in the summer of 1439, some members of the Greek delegation stayed behind or soon returned to Italy, and two Byzantine prelates became cardinals of the Roman church, Bessarion and Isidore of Kiev. Isidore had been appointed metropolitan of Kiev and all Russia by the patriarch in 1436 and made a cardinal by the pope seven years later.¹⁴⁵ Like Bessarion, Isidore also took an interest in manuscripts, even if he did not have as extensive a library.¹⁴⁶ We know, for example, that he borrowed illuminated prophet books (Vat. gr. 1153–1154) from the Vatican Library

¹³⁸Carr, *Byzantine Illumination*, 121.

¹³⁹G. Prato and J. A. M. Sonderkamp, “Libro, testo, miniature: il caso del cod. Sinait. gr. 2123,” *Scrittura e Civiltà* 9 (1985), 309–23.

¹⁴⁰I. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts* (Leiden, 1976), fig. 20.

¹⁴¹M. Restle, “Ein Porträt Johannes VIII: Palaiologos auf dem Sinai,” *Festschrift Luitpold Dussler* (Munich, 1972), 135; R. Weiss, *Pisanello’s Medallion of the Emperor John VIII Palaeologus* (London, 1966), 15–16.

¹⁴²On the St. Petersburg manuscript and its relation to Sinai 2123, see Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 90–91. The manuscript is further discussed by him in “An Unusual Iconographic Type of the Seated Evangelist,” *Δελτ. Χριστ. Αρχ. Έτ.*, ser. 4, 10 (1980/81), 137–46. The distinctive series of images shared by both manuscripts deserves further study.

¹⁴³Spatharakis, *Portrait*, 51.

¹⁴⁴L. Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, II (London, 1891), 209, referring to a potentially fascinating document in the Genoese archives that, as far as I know, is unpublished.

¹⁴⁵Gill, *Personalities*, 68, 74.

¹⁴⁶His manuscripts are discussed by Mercati, *Scritti d’Isidoro*, 60–102.

around the middle of the century, thereby localizing these illuminated Byzantine manuscripts in Rome in those years.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, Mercati has proposed that Isidore was responsible for bringing to Rome a deluxe copy of the *Heavenly Ladder* of John Climacus, Vat. gr. 394, of the eleventh century.¹⁴⁸ Isidore's predecessor as the Russian metropolitan had dedicated the manuscript to the metropole of Moscow, and it is reasonable to conclude that Isidore acquired the manuscript during his Russian travels.

Turning to Cardinal Bessarion, there is, of course, an almost embarrassing abundance of material, when compared to earlier Italian collectors of Greek manuscripts. Bessarion already had a considerable library before emigrating to Italy, but with the new resources available to him, and galvanized by the threat to Greek culture after the fall of Constantinople, he set out to form a comprehensive collection of Greek literature, both sacred and profane. In 1468, he donated to the Republic of Venice his library that included 482 Greek manuscripts,¹⁴⁹ a number of which were illuminated—the aforementioned Psalter of Basil II, a copy of Pseudo-Oppian (Bibl. Marc. gr. 479), and various Gospel books and lectionaries, including one adapted by Bessarion for contemporary use (Bibl. Marc. gr. 12).¹⁵⁰ The latter, written in uncials, is yet another middle Byzantine lectionary, probably written in Constantinople and embellished with illuminated headpieces and initials and with evangelist portraits, two of which survive.¹⁵¹

The scribe of the refashioning was Ioannes Rhosos, an emigré himself, who for fifty years copied scores of Greek texts for diverse Italian patrons. Mioni has noted that Rhosos replaced various sections of the lectionary with different readings, while retaining the original Byzantine headpieces and initials.¹⁵² Rhosos erased and rewrote some pages, added passages in the margins, but was careful to save and reuse the Byzantine initials. Some were cut out and pasted in new locations, resulting in bizarre duplications, where two original initials appear side by side.¹⁵³ Why Bessarion felt the need to alter the text of a Greek lectionary has yet to be explained. Perhaps the explanation will be found in the history of the Byzantine lectionary text and a change in liturgical practice between the original text of the tenth or eleventh century and the fifteenth century, or it might be credited to the more basic differences between Greek and Latin liturgical customs. That Bessarion, himself Greek in origin of course, may have come to regard this Byzantine manuscript as somewhat foreign is suggested by his curious reference to “more grecorum” in his note of ownership: “Euangelia quotidiana more grecorum meus b. card. Tusculani.” The act of refashioning, while preserving the old decoration, may suggest that Bessarion was interested in Byzantine illumination per se. Moreover, in his ex libris,

¹⁴⁷ Devreesse, *Fonds grec*, 40. On the manuscripts most recently, J. Lowden, *Illuminated Prophet Books: A Study of Byzantine Manuscripts of the Major and Minor Prophets* (University Park, Penn., 1988), 32–38.

¹⁴⁸ Mercati, *Scritti d'Isidoro*, 65, 71. The provenance of the manuscript is also discussed by J. R. Martin, *The Illustration of the Heavenly Ladder of John Climacus* (Princeton, 1954), 179–80; and Devreesse, *Codices Vaticani Graeci*, II, 94.

¹⁴⁹ Most recently on Bessarion and his books, there is Wilson, *From Byzantium*, 62–67; and M. Zorzi, *La Libreria di San Marco* (Milan, 1987), 45–61.

¹⁵⁰ Many of these books are included in Leporace and Mioni, *Cento codici*.

¹⁵¹ Furlan, *Codici greci*, I, 39–44, figs. 30–34. Mioni (“Bessarione bibliofilo,” 67) notes that the manuscript has an entry referring to the Chalkoprateia.

¹⁵² E. Mioni, “Bessarione scriba e alcune suoi collaboratori,” *Miscellanea Marciana di studi Bessarionei = Medioevo e Umanesimo* 24 (Padua, 1976), 303.

¹⁵³ Furlan, *Codici greci*, I, fig. 31.

Bessarion took note of the relative beauty of his manuscripts,¹⁵⁴ and certainly Bessarion owned a number of illuminated manuscripts that are celebrated today. Yet given Bessarion's reputation as both a bibliophile and a philologist, the suspicion remains that he was building a library first, and a collection of fine books second.

Bessarion obtained his Greek manuscripts either by retaining scribes, such as Rhosos, to copy new books for him in Italy and Crete or by purchasing older manuscripts through agents in various places.¹⁵⁵ Niccolò Perotti, for example, sent him four books from Trebizond, including the four Gospels, the homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus, and two classical texts.¹⁵⁶ The illustrated Pseudo-Oppian (Bibl. Marc. gr. 479) had been owned by Giovanni Aurispa,¹⁵⁷ and the cardinal was an eager purchaser of the Greek manuscripts that remained in Aurispa's possession at his death in 1459.¹⁵⁸ Although information about the creation of Bessarion's library is available, the source for any particular manuscript is not always known, especially in the case of those religious manuscripts of interest to the present study. It is tempting, however, to associate the uncial lectionary that Rhosos revised with the aforementioned decorated Εὐαγγέλια Κυριακά, also written in uncials, that Aurispa had brought back from Constantinople in 1423. Admittedly, however, the latter is not precisely identified in the final inventory of Aurispa's books.¹⁵⁹

The only rival in all of Europe to the collection of Greek manuscripts that Bessarion assembled in Rome and later dispatched to Venice was the library that Pope Nicholas V (1447–55) and later Sixtus IV (1471–84) created at the Vatican. The pontificate of Nicholas represents a qualitative and quantitative shift in the collecting of Greek manuscripts and thus marks the beginning of the efflorescence of Greek studies and manuscript acquisitions during the latter half of the fifteenth century, developments quite beyond the limits of the present paper. Suffice it to conclude that the collecting of Greek manuscripts during this period became institutionalized and supported by resources, financial and others, that far exceeded those available even to wealthy aristocrats in Florence or to a well-connected Greek cardinal in Rome. Nicholas' agents procured Greek and Latin manuscripts from throughout eastern and western Europe and were at work in Constantinople before and after the Turkish conquest.¹⁶⁰ Trained as a humanist and present during the debates of the Council of Florence, Nicholas, according to the account of the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci, had a lifetime interest in two things—buildings and books. Before he became pope and when he was comparatively impoverished, the then Tommaso Parentucelli would go into debt to pay the scribes and miniaturists of his books.¹⁶¹ As pope and with the significant backing of the proceeds from the Jubilee

¹⁵⁴ Mioni, "Bessarione bibliofilo," 76.

¹⁵⁵ See the detailed discussion of one of those agents, Michael Apostolis, in Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars*, 73–110.

¹⁵⁶ E. Müntz and P. Fabre, *La Bibliothèque du Vatican au XV^e siècle* (Paris, 1887), 114; G. Mercati, *Per la cronologia della vita e degli scritti di Niccolò Perotti* (Rome, 1925), 40–41.

¹⁵⁷ Furlan, *Codici greci*, V, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Zorzi, *Libreria*, 47; Franceschini, *Aurispa*, 44; Mioni, "Bessarione bibliofilo," 73–74.

¹⁵⁹ The usual problem is that one is never certain if an inventory is distinguishing between a manuscript of the four Gospels and a Gospel lectionary, a distinction that escapes some scholars even today; hence the ambiguity of the following entry: "item liber quatuor Evangelistarum. L. G. in carta membrana cum albis" (Franceschini, *Aurispa*, 80).

¹⁶⁰ G. Manetti, *Vita Nicolai V*, in Muratori, *RerItalSS* [N.S.], III (Milan, 1734), col. 926.

¹⁶¹ Da Bisticci, *Vite*, I, 45, 47.

of 1450, Nicholas was able to start a number of building projects in Rome and to establish a library open to a certain definition of the Roman public.¹⁶² In the process, the Vatican's holdings rose from little or nothing to 353 Greek manuscripts by the inventory of 1455 that was prepared at the beginning of the pontificate of Nicholas' successor, Calixtus III.¹⁶³ Nicholas' concerted efforts to obtain Greek manuscripts and to commission translations of classical and religious texts from Greek into Latin made Rome the principal Italian center for Hellenic studies at mid-century,¹⁶⁴ and in the process enriched those Hellenists fortunate enough to be in Rome and to receive commissions for translations.¹⁶⁵ The humanist Francesco Filelfo even proclaimed in a letter to Calixtus III that thanks to Nicholas V, Greece had not perished but had merely migrated to what was formerly called Magna Grecia,¹⁶⁶ a claim that provides little solace to Byzantinists today.

The Byzantine manuscripts that Nicholas had brought to Rome included at least a few decorated books with known art historical pedigrees, in addition to the aforementioned prophet books.¹⁶⁷ All such manuscripts, whether secular or religious, decorated or undecorated, were absorbed into a social and intellectual context of Renaissance Italy that was far different from that prevailing in late medieval Constantinople. They were housed in a library established by Nicholas in his residence next to St. Peter's, the Vatican palace that beginning in this period was to become a metonym for the papacy itself. Decorated with classically inspired frescoes,¹⁶⁸ the library was prominently marked with Nicholas' coats-of-arms, part of what Tafuri calls a general process of "resignification" that extended throughout Rome.¹⁶⁹ The papal manuscripts were stored in eight large chests,¹⁷⁰ classed according to Western intellectual structures, well known to a pope that had once compiled a canon of approved texts for Cosimo de' Medici,¹⁷¹ and divided into two principal categories, the Latin and Greek libraries, no vernacular literature being admitted. According to Manetti, Nicholas' biographer, the pope's efforts recall those of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the founder of the library of Alexandria,¹⁷² and the strict Greek-Latin division replicates the famous libraries of imperial Rome established by Augustus, Trajan, or Hadrian.¹⁷³

As a result of these and other resitings over the centuries, Byzantine manuscripts

¹⁶²"per comune uso di tutta la corte di Roma": *ibid.*, 65, also 62–63. Two excellent books recount the history of Nicholas' building projects: C. W. Westfall, *In This Most Perfect Paradise: Alberti, Nicholas V, and the Invention of Conscious Urban Planning in Rome, 1447–1455* (University Park, Penn., 1974); and C. Burroughs, *From Signs to Design: Environmental Process and Reform in Early Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

¹⁶³See Devreesse, *Fonds grec*, 7–36.

¹⁶⁴Wilson, *From Byzantium*, 76–85.

¹⁶⁵Pastor, *History of the Popes*, II, 199–200.

¹⁶⁶Quoted in Müntz and Fabre, *Bibliothèque*, 37–38 n. 2.

¹⁶⁷Among the illustrated manuscripts tentatively or firmly identified from the 1455 inventory by Devreesse (*Fonds grec*, 21, 22) are the following: Vat. gr. 333, Book of Kings; Vat. gr. 342, Psalter; Vat. gr. 755, Book of Isaiah.

¹⁶⁸T. Yuen, "The 'Bibliotheca Graeca': Castagno, Alberti, and Ancient Sources," *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970), 725–36.

¹⁶⁹As discussed by Burroughs, *From Signs to Design*, 12–15.

¹⁷⁰Westfall, *Paradise*, 139–40.

¹⁷¹See Vespasiano da Bisticci and the commentary of Greco in *Vite* (as in note 54), I, 46–47; also L. E. Boyle in *Rome Reborn*, xi–xii.

¹⁷²Manetti, *Vita Nicolai V*, col. 926.

¹⁷³C. L. Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome* (Bloomington, Ind., 1985), 282.

acquired other identities, becoming, to this or that degree, Greek, Roman, Italian, papal, and Catholic, and eventually the object of post-Enlightenment scholarly inquiries such as this. Because Nicholas and his successors did indeed succeed in making a hospitable center for scholarship, the Vatican's Greek manuscripts have long been the best studied anywhere. But the collecting agenda of Renaissance humanists and popes, reaffirmed and naturalized by centuries of subsequent scholarship, should never be mistaken for Byzantium itself. Thus, whereas the efforts of so many Italian agents and collectors before and after 1453 did indeed manage to preserve a great proportion of the classical literature that had survived to the late Middle Ages, it should not be forgotten that those same Italians collected selectively, and much of what they left behind in Constantinople has disappeared. Hence, many written records of Byzantine social, commercial, diplomatic, and institutional life, the type of evidence from which Western medieval historians write their new histories of mentalities or of everyday life, have perished, leaving only their traces in the form of the thousands of Byzantine lead seals that were once attached to them.

In the domain of Byzantine art history, the early acquisition policies of the Italians also had consequences. Humanists preferred older manuscripts, especially those written in uncial scripts.¹⁷⁴ They naturally wanted new and unknown texts, whether classical or patristic, and a single library had no need for multiple copies of a lectionary or Gospel book in Greek. Thus many Biblical and liturgical manuscripts of a later date were not acquired. The history of Palaeologan manuscript illumination, as a result, has to be primarily written from manuscripts that are still in eastern Mediterranean collections, above all those on Mt. Athos. Much of the Vatican's holdings in this area were obtained through other means. For example, the finest decorated Palaeologan manuscripts in the Vatican, the Gospels and the Praxapostolos from the Palaeologina group (Vat. gr. 1158 and 1208), were gifts to Pope Innocent VIII (1484–92) from the queen of Cyprus, Carlotta di Lusignano.¹⁷⁵ But that story belongs to the later history of Italian collections.

In the present article, I have tried to survey the beginnings of the Italian appropriation of Byzantine illuminated manuscripts. The two periods of my essay have yielded different results. Before 1400, Greek manuscripts, illustrated or otherwise, are rare in Italy—doubtlessly because few people could read them—so that the historical reception of Byzantine illuminated manuscripts differs significantly from that of icons or metalwork. Thus art historical arguments predicated upon the widespread circulation of cycles of Byzantine miniatures need to be viewed with caution. At the same time, however, those manuscripts that were available, e.g., the Cotton Genesis and most likely Vat. gr. 756, may have been highly regarded, in part because they were so rare. After 1400, Greek manuscripts begin to be actively acquired, so that by the time the empire fell, a considerable demand already existed for those manuscripts that survived the sack of Constantinople. That demand continued and inspired the considerable efforts expended to en-

¹⁷⁴Already at the end of the 14th century, Coluccio Salutati wanted a manuscript of Homer “grossis literis et in pergameno,” and Francesco Filelfo also wanted books in uncials: Wilson, *From Byzantium*, 8, 53.

¹⁷⁵G. Mercati, “I mss. biblici greci donati da Carlotta di Lusignano ad Innocenzo VIII,” in his *Opere Minori*, II (Vatican, 1937), 480–81.

large collections in Rome, Florence, and elsewhere during the latter half of the fifteenth century.

Like any culture, ours included, quattrocento Italy appropriated what it appreciated, and not only Byzantinists should be grateful for what the Italians made their own. At the same time, it is useful and necessary to be aware that Byzantine art has passed through multiple Italian filters from the acquisition policies of the early humanists, to the later Mannerist and chauvinistic aesthetics of Giorgio Vasari and his highly influential construction of the history of art, to the first scholarly investigations of Byzantine art, based primarily on monuments in Italy. That history of reception remains largely unwritten. In the case of illustrated Greek manuscripts, the story leads to the nineteenth century and its senses of Byzantine painting, mainly derived from those illuminated manuscripts that had long been stockpiled in western European collections, and to a remarkable book, first published in Russian in 1876 and translated into French in 1886. *Histoire de l'art byzantin considéré principalement dans les miniatures*, “the first systematic treatment of book illumination,” was written by Nikodim Kondakov, “the real founder of Byzantine art history,” according to the late Kurt Weitzmann,¹⁷⁶ whose own contributions were not inconsiderable. In the twentieth century, philological methods, born in the idealism of German philology, reconfigured the history of Byzantine illumination, as did the steady increase in the publication of collections outside western Europe. But the foundations of that inquiry rest upon the material that began to be collected in quantity in Italy in the fifteenth century and then in France in the sixteenth century.

To close my account, I want at the same time to open it up and to address the consequences of narratives such as mine. Read one way, it is a story with a happy ending. The Italians became ever more sensitive to Greek culture and to Byzantium's role in its preservation through the agency of, first, the Councils of Basel and Florence, and later, humanists, such as Cardinal Bessarion and Pope Nicholas V. Large numbers of Greek manuscripts were collected and thereby preserved to this day. As both cause and effect, there developed a renewed interest in Greek literature, both pagan and Christian, and something that “we” enjoy and celebrate as the Renaissance, a phenomenon seemingly unproblematic and wholly positive. Indeed no less a critic of intracultural dynamics than Edward Said recently penned the following about the period: “The Greek classics served the Italian, French, and English humanists without the troublesome interposition of actual Greeks. Texts by dead people were read, appreciated, and appropriated by people who imagined an ideal commonwealth. This is one reason that scholars rarely speak suspiciously or disparagingly of the Renaissance.”¹⁷⁷

Said believes that the situation is different for modern times, when “thinking about cultural exchange involves thinking about domination and forcible appropriation: someone loses, someone gains.”¹⁷⁸ However, past appropriations, I would argue, are not so different from present ones, and it is regrettable that the author of a book so remarkable and influential as his *Orientalism* (1978) would not have realized that the Renaissance's Greek literature was appropriated from people, who were very much alive. They re-

¹⁷⁶ K. Weitzmann, *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* (Chicago, 1971), 176.

¹⁷⁷ E. W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993), 195.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

ferred to themselves as Romans and later as Hellenes. It is we who call them Byzantines and assign to the epithet "Byzantine" connotations that are very much a part of Orientalism.

What would my account have looked like, if rather than taking the Renaissance, i.e., Italian, point of view, I had adopted the Byzantine perspective and had attempted to understand the consequences for Byzantium of the migration of manuscripts, artifacts, and scholars to the West? To answer would require another paper, but I close with a few thoughts. For one thing, a narrative of absence would be more difficult to write, more melancholic in tone, and more subjunctive in voice. Presumably the loss of so many manuscripts, especially manuscripts of high prestige, such as the decorated ones, must have frustrated the continuation of medieval culture even on its former bases, much less the kind of cultural rebirth so acclaimed for Italy. It robbed ecclesiastical collections, the principal ones that survived the Ottomans, of the raw materials for such study in later centuries. Bessarion had the admirable intention of gathering Greek literature together in one place, so that future Greeks could preserve a heritage, which distinguished them from "barbarians and slaves,"¹⁷⁹ but the ultimate result was to sequester that heritage in a Venetian library. Moreover, it was the seeming lack of interest shown by modern Greeks in ancient Greek culture, a topos of European travel accounts to the Ottoman Empire, that made possible and even sanctioned the further appropriation of manuscripts and antiquities by the West. The argument, well known in the nineteenth century and still encountered in this century, goes as follows: because easterners could not properly appreciate what they had, westerners were the proper custodians of their artifacts.¹⁸⁰ The result is that accumulation of cultural treasure in Western museums and libraries with which I began and the production of scholarly accounts about them with which I end, for now.

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¹⁷⁹Geanakoplos, *Greek Scholars*, 82.

¹⁸⁰Cf. Curzon, *Visits*, 10: "... when I was in those countries the monastic libraries were almost in every instance utterly neglected and cast away; ... excepting myself, there was no one who would have given five pounds for any one of them. ... It is only to be hoped that they [the monks] have made a better use of the money than they ever did of the manuscripts which they have since sold to travellers and to the emissaries of more enlightened European Governments ..."